

Handwritten: 2-10-62

Handwritten: Conference on Cuba

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. In my statement before the 1024th meeting of the Security Council on 24 October 1962 I informed the Council that I had sent identically worded telegrams to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the President of the United States of America. The text of the telegram is reproduced as Annex I.

2. The reply to my appeal to the President of the United States, which was read out by the representative of the United States at the 1025th meeting of the Security Council, was as follows:

"I deeply appreciate the spirit which prompted your message of yesterday. As we made clear in the Security Council, the existing threat was created by the secret introduction of offensive weapons into Cuba, and the answer lies in the removal of such weapons. In your message and in your statement to the Security Council last night, you have made certain suggestions and have invited preliminary talks to determine whether satisfactory arrangements can be assured. Ambassador Stevenson is ready to discuss promptly these arrangements with you. I can assure you of our desire to reach a satisfactory and a peaceful solution of this matter."

3. Later on in the same meeting the President of the Security Council, representing the USSR, read out the reply from the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, which was as follows:

"I have received your appeal and carefully studied the proposals it contains. I welcome your initiative. I understand your concern about the situation obtaining in the Caribbean, since the Soviet Government

also considers this situation as highly dangerous and requiring an immediate intercession by the United Nations.

"I wish to inform you that I agree with your proposal, which meets the interests of peace."

4. Thereafter the representative of the United Arab Republic made a statement in the Security Council in the course of which he said:

"The Council has just heard the message of President Kennedy in response to the appeal which was addressed to him by the Acting Secretary-General..... We also welcome Chairman Khrushchev's letter to the Acting Secretary-General agreeing to his proposal, which meets the interests of peace, and I believe that the climate is ripe for the parties to come together..... If there are no more speakers on the list, the members of the Council might agree that, in the light of the recent developments, particularly the encouraging statements of the representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union, the Council should adjourn its meeting."

5. The representative of Ghana then stated:

"Indeed, my delegation welcomes the responses conveyed by the President of the United States and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union to the timely appeal and constructive suggestions addressed to them yesterday by the Acting Secretary-General..... Our understanding of this response, indeed our hope and prayer, is that while refraining from any

action which might aggravate the situation, the parties concerned -- that is to say the United States, Cuba and the Soviet Union -- will avail themselves of the Acting Secretary-General's offer of assistance to facilitate the negotiations on the immediate steps to be taken to remove the existing threat to world peace and to normalize the situation in the Caribbean ... My delegation earnestly hopes that it will be possible for the Acting Secretary-General to continue his vigorous task and to report in time to the Security Council meeting in conclave. We are confident that when the time comes the parties, in conjunction with the Acting Secretary-General, would then approach the President of the Council at the time so that we could have a meeting to consider this situation further."

6. Before the meeting concluded the representative of Chile stated:
- "Mr. President, I wish to thank you and the members of the Council for granting me an opportunity to say what I had planned to say earlier ... When I asked to speak at that time, I was going to make a proposal similar to the one that was later made by the representative of the United Arab Republic and that was so eloquently supported and seconded by the representative of Ghana.

"I entirely agree with what they have both said."

7. From the above extracts it seems to me that the Council expects from me a report on the further action taken in regard to this particular item on the agenda of the Security Council. I submit the following report accordingly:

8. On 25 November 1962, I replied to both the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the President of the United States, thanking them

for their encouraging reply to my appeal of the previous day. I undertook to begin discussions with their respective envoys and trusted that the outcome of these discussions would be satisfactory to all concerned and would advance the cause of peace. The same day it was brought to my attention that there was some danger of a confrontation at sea between Soviet ships and United States vessels, which could lead to an aggravation of the situation. I accordingly sent urgent appeals to both the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the President of the United States, the texts of which, with their replies, are to be found in Annexes II and III respectively.

9. From 26 October 1962 onwards, I had a series of meetings with the Permanent Representatives and other designated representatives of the United States, the USSR and Cuba. On 26 October 1962, I sent message to the Prime Minister of Cuba, to which I received a reply the next day. The text of the message and the reply are to be found in Annex IV. I may draw attention to the fact that in the course of his reply to me the Prime Minister of Cuba stated:

" ... furthermore, should you consider it useful to the cause of peace, our Government would be glad to receive you in our country, as Secretary-General of the United Nations, with a view to direct discussions on the present crisis, prompted by our common purpose of freeing mankind from the dangers of war."

10. Meanwhile, following the initial discussions at United Nations Headquarters which I had undertaken separately with the representatives of the United States and the USSR, there was direct correspondence between

the President of the United States and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. Both the Permanent Representatives of the United States and the USSR were good enough to keep me fully informed of these exchanges. I would like to draw particular attention in this connection to the message dated 27 October 1962 from the President of the United States to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR (Annex V) and the reply to the Chairman (Annex VI).

11. Following the favourable developments reflected in the exchange of letters reproduced as Annexes V and VI, I decided to accept the invitation of the Prime Minister of Cuba to visit his country.

12. I acknowledged the message sent to me by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR in a letter dated 28 October 1962 which is reproduced as Annex VII.

13. While I was making preparations to visit Cuba, I received a communication from the Prime Minister of Cuba which is reproduced as Annex VIII. In this communication the Prime Minister has listed five points to which he attached particular importance.

14. In the course of 28 October 1962 I also sent a message to the Prime Minister of Cuba, which is reproduced as Annex IX.

15. I left for Cuba on the morning of 30 October and returned on the evening of 31 October. In the course of my visit I had two meetings with the President, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Cuba, which afforded me an opportunity to have extensive discussions on all aspects of the problem. On my return from Cuba I made a statement at Idlewild, the text of which is reproduced in Annex X.

16. At this point I would like to recapitulate briefly the main problems that were discussed during the period from 26 October to 31 October with the representatives of the United States, the USSR and Cuba. I understood that the main interest of the United States was, first of all, to ensure that "work should cease on offensive missile bases in Cuba and for all weapons systems in Cuba capable of offensive use to be rendered inoperable, under effective United Nations arrangements". The United States also attached importance to the undertaking, "with suitable safeguards, to halt the further introduction of such weapons systems into Cuba", by the USSR. In this context the United States was also anxious to have independent verification of the announced intention of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR voluntarily to suspend arms shipments to Cuba during the present period. On his part the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR had stated that he had instructed his officers "to take appropriate measures to discontinue the construction of the aforementioned facilities, to dismantle them and to return them to the Soviet Union". He was also "prepared to reach agreement to enable representatives of the United Nations to verify the dismantling of these means".

17. On the part of Cuba it was made clear to me that the Cuban Government could not accept any solution which they regarded as an infringement of the sovereignty of Cuba. Thus, while I was informed during my stay in Cuba that the dismantling of the missiles would be completed by 2 November 1962, Cuba would not permit United Nations verification of the dismantling and shipment of the missiles on the territory of Cuba. Similarly, Cuba could not accept any inspection of vessels coming into Cuba from the USSR or elsewhere with a view to verifying whether they carried any arms shipments or for any other purpose.

18. In these circumstances the problem of verification of the removal of the missiles from Cuba was resolved between representatives of the United States and the USSR in direct discussion, in the course of which it was agreed that these missiles would be inspected while they were in transit on the high seas between Cuba and the USSR.

19. On the question of verification of the suspension of arms shipments, it was agreed between the United States and the USSR that representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) could inspect on the high seas USSR vessels bound for Cuban territory. Agreement on the details of such inspection could not however be reached, in spite of the co-operation of the ICRC in sending to New York for detailed discussions with all parties a Special Representative assisted by an Aide. Accordingly, the Representative of the ICRC left for Geneva on 9 November 1962. On his departure I sent him a letter, a copy of which is reproduced as Annex XI. When it became clear subsequently that there would be occasion for the Red Cross inspection arrangements, I sent to the President of the ICRC a further letter, a copy of which is reproduced as Annex XII.

20. While these negotiations were going on, the quarantine measures imposed by the United States still remained effective. They were temporarily suspended during the period of my visit to Cuba but were resumed on my return. They were continued even after the United States authorities were apparently satisfied that the missiles in Cuba had indeed been dismantled and removed, as agreed to by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

21. The main difficulty at this stage arose over two points. The first was the problem of verification on the ground of the dismantling of the missile sites and the removal of the missiles from Cuba. The second was the insistence of the representatives of the United States that the IL-28 jet aircraft which had been shipped from the USSR to Cuba should also be removed and returned to the USSR.

22. In order to resolve the first-mentioned problem of verification, and taking into account the unwillingness of the Prime Minister of Cuba to receive representatives of the United Nations, I addressed a further letter to him suggesting that he might invite the Ambassadors accredited to the Government of Cuba, from a selected number of countries of Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, to constitute and form a group who, acting in concert, would undertake to verify the removal from Cuba of the offensive weapons systems in mention and to report to the Prime Minister and to me their verification to this effect. My proposals in this regard are contained in a letter from me to the Prime Minister of Cuba dated 12 November 1962, a copy of which is reproduced in Annex XIII. Regrettably the Prime Minister was unable to accept this proposal and a copy of his reply is reproduced as Annex XIV. At the same time he addressed to me a further message, dated 15 November, in the course of which he protested against certain infringements against the sovereignty of Cuba, by reason of the violation of the air space of Cuba by United States aircraft. The text of this message appears as Annex XV.

23. Thus the problem of verification on the ground remains to be solved. On the question of the IL-28 aircraft, late on the night of 19 November 1962 I received a message from the Prime Minister of Cuba in which he stated that "... the IL-28 medium bombers stationed on Cuban territory" were "the property of the Soviet Government" and that if the Soviet Government considered it desirable for the smooth conduct of the negotiations and the solution of the crisis to withdraw the IL-28 planes, the Revolutionary Government of Cuba would not object to this decision. This message is reproduced as Annex XVI. I acknowledged it in a letter dated 21 November which is reproduced as Annex XVII.

24. On 20 November 1962 the President of the United States announced that he had been "informed by Chairman Khrushchev that all of the IL-28 bombers now in Cuba will be withdrawn in 30 days". He had also agreed that "these planes can be observed and counted as they leave". Inasmuch as this went "a long way towards reducing the danger which faced this hemisphere four weeks ago", the President had that afternoon "instructed the Secretary of Defense to lift our naval quarantine". The text of the statement made by the President of the United States is reproduced as Annex XVIII.

25. It may be recalled that in his letter to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR dated 27 October 1962 (Annex V) the President of the United States stated:

"We, on our part, would agree — upon the establishment of adequate arrangements through the United Nations to ensure the carrying out and continuation of these commitments — (a) to remove promptly the

quarantine measures now in effect and (b) to give assurances against an invasion of Cuba and I am confident that other nations of the Western hemisphere would be prepared to do likewise."

26. From the above report it will be seen that while the first part of the assurances given by the President of the United States has been fulfilled, the second part has not, in the absence of "appropriate United Nations observation and supervision" on the territory of Cuba, as already reported.

27. I cannot conclude this report without paying tribute to the courtesy, co-operation and consideration that was shown by all the parties with whom I had to conduct these discussions. Apart from myself, the Security Council and the United Nations are indebted to these representatives for the way in which they have resolved the crisis which appeared to be threatening just five weeks ago.